

PURCHASE OF PLANES FROM U.S.S.R.

215. SHRI JAIRAMDAS DAULATRAM : Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state whether it is a fact that the Soviet Union wants India to purchase aircraft and helicopters from that country; and if so, for what purpose would these planes be useful to India?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION (DR. KARAN SINGH): The Soviet Union have offered aircraft and helicopters as an item for import into this country to balance the articles to be exported by India to the U. S. S. R. The Indian Airlines are examining the suitability of Soviet aircraft, alongwith other aircraft, in connection with the augmentation of their fleet.

KASHMIR UNDER U. N. RULE

216. SHRI JAIRAMDAS DAULATRAM:

SHRIMATI VIDYAWATI CHATURVEDI :

DR. (MRS.) MANGALADEVI TALWAR :

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Sheikh Abdullah has proposed that Kashmir should be placed under the administration of the United Nations during the next 5 years; and

(b) if so, whether the full text of Sheikh Abdullah's statement will be placed on the Table of the House?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI VIDYA CHARAN SHUKLA): (a) and (b) Government have seen a report to this effect which has been published by the "Hindustan Times" of 29th June, 1968, by arrangements with the "Daily Telegraphs", London. A copy of the report is attached. [See below]

HINDUSTAN TIMES

New Delhi, the 29th June, 1968

SHEIKH WANTS 15-YEAR UN RULE IN VALLEY

(Special to the Hindustan Times)

Srinagar, June 28.—Sheikh Abdullah has proposed United Nations control over the Kashmir Valley for five years. The people should then be allowed to opt for India, Pakistan or independence.

In an exclusive interview at his party headquarters in Srinagar on Wednesday the Sheikh spelt out his views for the first time since his release last January.

Apparently he was stung by a remark by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in Srinagar last weekend. She said then she had no intention of reopening talks with the Sheikh as he was "unable to make up his mind".

Policy of Drift

The Sheikh countered that the Government had failed to produce a policy "apart from one of drift. It is too divided to reach a decision".

Pressed for his own solution, he came out strongly in favour of the 1953 United Nations plan, drawn up by Sir Owen Dixon, under which the predominantly Hindu area of Jammu would have internal autonomy within India. Under the plan, Pakistan would be asked to grant similar self-government to Azad Kashmir, which she has occupied since 1948.

The "doubtful" sector, the rich valley, which both India and Pakistan prize so highly, would be placed under United Nations administration, though with the right to run its own internal affairs.

"Let all three areas develop over a five-year period with free elections for national assemblies," the Sheikh urged. "Then let the Valley choose whether to continue as before or decide between India, Pakistan or independence."

If independence was the choice, both Jammu and Kashmir should have the right either to join the new sovereign State or to merge fully with India, on the one hand, and Pakistan on the other.

By arrangement with the Daily Telegraph, London.

HIGH POWER COMMISSION TO STUDY DEFENCE OF EASTERN SECTOR OF INDIA

217. SHRI N. R. MUNISWAMY : Will the Minister of Home AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to appoint a High Power Commission to study the defence of the entire eastern sector of India in the context of the present clashes between rebel Nagas and Security Forces; and

(b) whether the present ceasefire agreement will be extended pending any decision on the hill peoples' demands in Assam?